
FUTURE ENROLLMENT AND FACILITIES TASK FORCE MEETING

MINUTES

Tuesday, January 19, 2010

Oliver Administration Building

Present

Appointed Task Force: Karen Lynch, Chair, Denise Arsenault and John Bento

Task Force Members: Mary Almeida (new), Mario Andrade (new), Randy Cloutier, Rebecca Fikiet, John Saviano, Melinda Thies and Diane Williamson

Karen Lynch called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

Chair's Introduction

Karen Lynch reported members of COA #3 had an interesting meeting with the Bristol Blue Ribbon Committee at Town Hall including discussion with Roger Williams and a debate with the Town Council. There was also a meeting in Warren with their Town Council. It is

clear there needs to be a joint meeting with all in order to put rumors to rest and for everyone to hear all the options. There is time before the proposition has to go to the State House to be put on the ballot. Melinda Thies said the Warren Town Council would like data on enrollment projections. Karen said it was made very clear that we are not asking for support, we are asking for the question to be put before the voters.

Mission Statement

The group reviewed three versions of the mission statement. Randy Cloutier suggested the addition of a timeline. Melinda said a new report from NESDEC has just been received that predicts a decline in student population; the Warren Town Council had mentioned there would be a decline. Karen argued that despite predictions, we have been seeing a slight growth. Denise Arsenault felt rather than a timeline, triggers are more important. Melinda added, we do not want to be reactive; we are doing the exploration of possible courses of action and triggers; the mission statement must be kept open ended and generic; version two is the most open ended and does not specify a town which is important because this could happen in Warren as well. Denise suggested stating grade Pre-K to 5 for clarification. Diane Williamson suggested adding "potential anticipated" before space shortages.

After discussion the consensus was to adopt the second statement

with the two additions noted:

„§The Future Enrollment and Facilities Task Force seeks to explore short- and long-term solutions to the potential shortage of classroom space in the elementary schools in the Bristol Warren Regional School District.¡”

Presentation

John Bento prepared a first draft of the presentation which will be made first to the School Committee, then to both Town Councils. After much discussion the attached draft was developed.

Comments from the Task Force

„¡ Karen Lynch: A list of facts will be drawn up for Melinda to review; we must continue on with the decisions made in the past; there has always been a Phase II to the master plan.

„¡ John Saviano: 52% of homes in Bristol and Warren are owned by people over 50 years old; when the economy improves, these homes will most likely be sold to families. There was a misconception in Warren that we are in trouble right now. The foreclosure rate for the

next 11 months is predicted to be higher than the past 12 months. We must be prepared for criticism, like „§you people screwed up;“, with the reasons why the Committee acted as it did. The presentation must be brief.

„Í Melinda Thies: We must consider guidance from RIDE; you have to prove you did due diligence or there will be no housing aid reimbursement; learning environment and teacher to student ratio should be mentioned. The presentation needs to focus on moving forward and must be generic.

„Í Diane Williamson: State the required classroom size. Because the Bristol Town Touncil felt backed into a corner and forced into the difficult decision to give up the Pastime, it should be explained that the Task Force wants to avoid an urgent situation, we realize we put you in a bad situation in the past and we do not want to repeat that. The option to use existing buildings is exciting. She senses that a new school is not a priority. Someone told her the reason people did not support transporting elementary kids was because of community based organized activities;Xchildren would not have the same kids and friends in both school and their activities. Karen argued that most activities are now multi-community organized. The towns must advocate for more affordable housing.

„Í Denise Arsenault: This should not be an emotional piece; we need a conciliatory tone; stress that we are doing well. If the new school

concept is not feasible or palatable, why stir the pot with it. The presentation should be very concise, clear and prioritized.

„Í John Bento: We are creating a contingency plan; as a result of past decisions, we are doing pretty well economically. If the country goes into a depression there may be Federal funds for building a new school; if the Town develops farm lands, the Town Council could stipulate a certain amount of land be used for a school. All COAs must be mentioned to show all options were considered by the group.

„Í Randy Cloutier: Most of the voters do not have children in the schools. Because of the economic situation, some young families could be moving back in with their parents.

John will incorporate all the points discussed at this meeting and reword the presentation using the same format and terminology for each COA, then send the revision out to the Task Force. Triggers for short term action and long term action will have to be identified. Presentation to the School Committee first will provide time for absorption and criticism. Melinda felt the material should not be sent to the full committee before hand and the presentation should be kept to 20 minutes at the most with no questions during the presentation. Karen felt the leader of each COA should give their own brief; different presenters will keep the presentation fresh. A few pictures might be helpful, but not so many as to lengthen the presentation.

John feels we should highlight the fact that this will be a living document to be adjusted as circumstances change and our long term fix can fluctuate at any time. Melinda said the Task Force has to build a strong case on why Reynolds is not feasible.

Next Meeting / Presentations

Task Force Meeting: February 23 or 25 (whichever date the high school PTO will not meet); 6:00 PM in the Oliver Administration Building

School Committee Presentation: March 8

Bristol and Warren Town Council Presentation: after Joint Finance

Adjournment

MOTION: At 9:20 PM, John Bento, seconded by Karen Lynch, motioned to adjourn; the motion passed unanimously.

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